1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them while she does her other work, but when they are old enough, they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when house repairs are needed or there are implements to be mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

The times for meals have not varied since the days when Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.* In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is interrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun dance*, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

J. Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1237 SV3 Haiti SV3 Mirebalais

not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit. The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for support. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a protective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li courailles pou' main. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pé la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here."

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced.

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow.

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Woodcarving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant occupation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty.

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
157 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
84 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
431 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
513 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.